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REPRODUCTIONS OF AMERICAN PICTURES.

ONE of the largest items in the trade of the Art dealers has, for many years, been in photographic reproductions of foreign pictures. Begun by the Paris house of Goupil & Co., and taken up in Germany by Hanfstaengl, the great Munich publisher, it has steadily developed into a vast and profitable business; a business which enriches its projectors and gives lucrative employment to numberless agents throughout the country. The application of the same system of reproduction and distribution to the productions of our own artists is worthy of special note.

A local photographic firm of extensive experience and a technical standard to their works which is conceded to be without equal in America, have perfected preparations for the multiplication of American pictures on the largest scale and in the highest style of the art. With a fine selection of negatives already prepared, and constantly receiving additions, they enter upon their venture under the most favorable auspices, and with every guarantee of the success they deserve.

The subjects already included in the portfolios of Messrs. Nicholls & Handy, the publishers in question, number among their authors artists of the foremost popularity and eminence. Their selection is especially strong in the works of our younger artists which have of recent years enjoyed such extensive appreciation and popularity. A striking and attractive picture of the decorative order is Virgilio Tojetti's figure of Judith, shown at the American Art Galleries last spring. In the long list of artists who have enjoyed equal justice at the firm's hands we find the names of W. H. Beard, T. W. Wood, A. F. Tait, Jerome Thompson, Edward Moran and his talented sons, W. H. Lippincott, Charles X. Harris, Kenyon Cox, T. W. Dewing, Francis Miller, Louis Moeller, Alfred Fredericks, Alfred Kappes, Walter Satterlee, George W. Maynard, Will. H. Low, J. H. Witt, A. C. Howland, Joseph H. Boston, Jame Hart, William Morgan, W. A. Coffin, Douglas Volk, George DeForest Brush, J. H. Caliga, C. Y. Turner and Arthur Parton. By the time the Art season is fairly open, there will be few painters of note among us who will not have representative reproductions in the collection.

The selection of the subjects is, naturally, made with a view to their popularity with the public. A story, a sentiment, or a decorative motive is sought for to give special interest to each plate. Among the subjects thus far chosen are Caliga's "A Flaw in the Title," Percy Moran's "The Miller's Daughter," A. F. Tait's "Jack in Office," W. H. Beard's "Monkey with the Puppies," a pen and ink sketch of which appeared in the ART UNION last year; Brush's "Laying away a Brave," Lippincott's "Five o'clock Tea," Francis Miller's "Country Railway Station," Kappe's "Rent Day," Alfred Fredericks' "Cinderella," Arthur Parton's fine "Winter on the Hudson River," and Charles X. Harris's "Dress Rehearsal." The others are fully up, in interest and quality, to the standard of which these provide an example.

The prices at which these pictures are given to the public, are an additional guarantee of their inevitable popularity, and their influence on the trade in similar foreign reproductions must be soon and severely felt. The arrangement made by the publishers with the artists guarantees the latter a royalty on every copy sold.

The execution of the reproductions is characterized by an accuracy truly remarkable in photographic copies of works in color. The subtle relations of the original tints are preserved with curious delicacy, and the skill with which the retouching is executed merits equal commendation. This latter work is performed by retouchers whose experience in the art was gained in the Hanfstaengl establishment, and who were specially engaged for the purpose. While eliminating the coarsenesses and harshnesses inseparable from reproductions in which the texture of the canvass and the technique of the painter are alike exaggerated, they preserve all the fine qualities of finish and execution which render a picture characteristic of the artist. The mechanical feeling of the photograph is completely avoided. It is what it purports to be—a reproduction of the artist's work, not a translation, smoothed down and rounded off and deprived of character by the laborious hand of a skilled mechanic.

This may be specially noted in the enlarged copies of some of the most striking cabinet pictures which have of recent years won favor for our artists, and in the very large reproductions of which the firm makes a specialty. The ordinary prints are calculated on a scale of 18x22 inches, the proportion, of course, varying with the shape of the original. But an enormous camera, which is so large that it has to be kept in sections and put together for use, enables the house to secure reproductions as vast in size as 36x40 inches. A copy of Alfred Fredericks' "Guinevere," from the prize exhibition of the American Art Association, measures 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ x34 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and is in every way as perfect as the smaller reproductions. These are the largest photographs which can be or have been made in America.

ABOUT ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUES.

WITH every exhibition which places an illustrated catalogue before the public, our newspapers propound the question, "Why cannot our illustrated catalogues be made as interesting as those of the Paris Salon?" The catalogues afford the answer in themselves. You cannot make an illustrated catalogue without drawings to illustrate it, and if those drawings are weak in execution or trifling in character, the book is bound to show it.

The sketches which illustrate the Salon Catalogues are, almost without exception, large, bold and vigorous in execution, calculated to reduce and reproduce with striking effect. Those in our own catalogues are only too often the flimsiest and weakest pretexts, which neither reproduce the pictures or do their makers justice.

Still, year by year, an improvement in this direction is manifest. The catalogues of our Water Color Society would be a credit to any nation, and those of our other exhibitions are certainly inferior only to the French. The "Academy Notes," originally made up in imitation of the books published by Mr. Blackburn in England, are now better hand-books, artistically and typographically, than any published in the United Kingdom, and much more interesting and valuable in their reading matter.

The chief difficulty the maker of an illustrated catalogue meets in this country is the indifference of so many of our artists to a work which is, in reality, an excellent advertisement for them. This is shown in the make-up of the catalogues. The Salon book is filled with original drawings contributed by the artists, and worked up by them with a view to their making the best effect possible in print. Here, with the exception of the minority of our painters, who can draw, and who cheerfully do their best, the most important drawings in the catalogues are made by a copyist employed for the purpose by the publisher.

Nothing is worth doing unless it is worth doing well. A catalogue drawing should be, in its way, as representative of the artist as his picture itself. When our artists all acknowledge and act upon this fact, we may be able to see the Salon Catalogue and go it an "Academy Notes" better. Till then, we suppose, the critics must grumble—which they probably would do anyhow.

THE ART UNION DISTRIBUTION.

The final report to the subscribers to THE AMERICAN ART UNION for the year 1884, has been rendered by the Committee in charge, as follows:

The Committee appointed to dispose of the works of Art received from the Board of Control of the American Art Union for the joint account of the subscribers for the year 1884, have to report that following the receipt of the pictures on February 1st, 1885, circulars were sent to all of the subscribers, requesting their votes as to the final disposition of the works. 183 votes were returned and canvassed by the Committee at a meeting held on the 30th of March. Of these votes, 120 were in favor of a distribution by lot; 25 left the matter to the discretion of the Committee; 12 favored a sale and an equal division of the proceeds among the subscribers, and 26 were scattering in their recommendations. Conforming to the wishes expressed by the majority of the votes sent in, the Committee proceeded to a distribution by lot, in the presence of a number of subscribers, who were called in as witnesses. Every subscriber was represented by a numbered card, and the awards were as follows:

1. Danger (W. H. Beard, N. A.), awarded to E. H. Cole, Brooklyn, N. Y.
2. Autumn, New Hampshire (A. Bierstadt, N. A.), awarded to S. Hartshorne, Short Hills, N. J.
3. Early Morning, Sag Harbor (M. F. H. DeHaas, N. A.), awarded to J. C. Emery, Montpelier, Vt.
4. Sketch (F. Delmein, N. A.), awarded to Mrs. J. K. Burgess, Brookline, Mass.
5. Winter Twilight on the Hackensack (Jervis McEntee, N. A.), awarded to Miss A. E. Hanscombe, Chicago, Ill.
6. Moravatio Merico (T. Moran, N. A.), awarded to E. T. Erhart, Brooklyn.
7. On Thatcher's Island (J. C. Nicoll, A. N. A.), awarded to Mrs. Eli Butler, Meriden, Ct.
8. Solid Comfort (E. Wood Perry, N. A.), awarded to Charles Collins, New York.
9. A Spring Twilight (Julian Rex), awarded to H. L. Hotchkiss, New York.
10. "The Two Roses" (Walter Satterlee, A. N. A.), awarded to J. T. Ijams, New York.
11. Salmon Brook, Ct. (A. D. Shattuck, N. A.), awarded to Edward M. Brown, New York.
12. "Sallie" (Walter Shirlawn), awarded to Alexander Robb, Brooklyn, N. Y.
13. In the White Mountains (W. L. Sonntag, N. A.), awarded to H. L. Sherman, Holyoke, Mass.
14. "Priscilla" (Geo. H. Story, A. N. A.), awarded to Mrs. W. H. Gillespie, Aspen, Col.
15. A Westchester Meadow (K. Van Elten, N. A.), awarded to W. M. Goodby, New York.
16. Sunset, Casco Bay, Me. (Henry Farrer), awarded to Chas. Tracy, New York.
17. A French Farmyard (J. Wells Champney, A. N. A.), awarded to Mrs. P. C. Skiff, New Haven, Ct.
18. Picnic by the Lake (J. Wells Champney, A. N. A.), awarded to L. N. Bartlett, Washington, D. C.
19. A Stolen Glance (T. W. Wood, N. A.), awarded to Mrs. W. E. Dean, San Francisco, Cal.
20. Election Returns (T. W. Wood, N. A.), awarded to Miss Marion V. Pearce, Toppfield, Mass.
21. Fresh Eggs (T. W. Wood, N. A.), awarded to Dr. R. M. Streeter, New York.

All of the pictures have now been delivered to their respective owners.

CALVERT VAUX,
WM. C. CHURCH,
O. N. ROOD.